

Monday, November 30, 2015

My Friends in Christ,

Happy Advent!

As the season of Advent marks the beginning of our Liturgical New Year, I want to pause and take stock of the past year.

One year ago, the Mission Committee and I set three goals for our parish: 1) complete renovations in St. Giles' Hall, 2) increase our Sunday worship attendance, and 3) promote the Anglican/Episcopal Brand in our community.

One year later, we can triumphantly claim that we met our first goal! Clearly, one highlight from our past year together was the opening and rededication of St. Giles' Hall. Together, we transformed a neglected back building into a vibrant Family Ministry and Community Resource space. In just a few short weeks, St. Giles' Hall has quickly become a locus of activity for our parish. Our BBQ class on "Who Wrote the Bible" has been a fun and informative look at Scripture. Scripture has also captivated our young ones as our burgeoning Lego Sunday School ministry has allowed children to interpret scripture in their own Lego creations.

As a result, we are seeing the effects of these ministries as new families visit our parish week after week. In turn, we have made incredible progress towards our second goal of increasing Sunday worship attendance. Since St. Giles' Hall opened, our weekly attendance has swelled nearly 40%—we now average 25 in our Sunday services!—and compared to last year, our weekly attendance is up 30%.

The renovations of St. Giles' Hall were incredibly ambitious for a parish our size. In effect, we were spending the equivalent of *an entire year's budget* during the span of our two-year renovation process. And so while we are thrilled at the impact St. Giles' Hall has made in the life of our parish, we must also acknowledge this investment on our physical plant has also stressed our parish finances. Currently, we are operating a deficit of nearly \$4500—one we hope to close with our Year-End Campaign. (*More information about this campaign is included in the December Newsletter*)

In the midst of this season of Advent—a time in which we await the gift of Christ—we are asking parishioners to consider their own gifts of Time, Talent, and Treasure, and how they could employ them in the service of the Church.

Attached to this letter, please find our 2015 Pledge Form. I ask that you consider prayerfully the many ways in which God has blessed our lives, and in which ways you can return some of those blessings back to God for the work of the Church. The Pledge Form asks each of us to consider the many ways in which we can give to our Time, our Talents, and of our Treasure in service of God's Kingdom.

This is a very exciting time in the life of our parish! Together with the Mission Committee, we are planning a wide variety of programs and services to help strengthen the faith of our congregation as well as attract new members to join our parish family. Yet, all of these programs depend on the resources we steward on God's behalf. It is my sincere hope that each of us will respond to the needs of the Church with the same grace and generosity that you have shown so often in the past.

In His service,

The Rev. Matt Warren  
Vicar